

Message Text

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ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 AID-05 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

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R 100447Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4809

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

CDR JCRC

CONFIDENTIAL CANBERRA 0220

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, EAID, AS, LA

SUBJECT: DEAN/SHARMAN CASE AND SOTH PHETRASY'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

REF: (A) STATE 004211; (B) VIENTIANE 0073

1. EMBOFF RAISED DEAN/SHARMAN CASE JAN 10 WITH AUSTRALIAN DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MILLER, ACTING ASST SECRETARY, SOUTH ASIA BRANCH). NOTING SOTH PHETRASY'S PROSPECTIVE VISIT TO AUSTRALIA, EMBOFF ASKED IF AUSTRALIANS PLANNED TO RAISE CASE WITH HIM.

2. MILLER SAID THAT SOTH WILL BE IN AUSTRALIA JAN 15 TO 22, VISITING BRISBANE, SYDNEY, AND CANBERRA. AUSTRALIANS BELIEVE THAT SOTH WILL TRANSIT VIENTIANE PRIOR TO COMING TO AUSTRALIA, AND AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN LAOS HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ENSURE THAT SOTH IS AWARE OF CASE, WHICH LIKELY TO BE RAISED DURING HIS VISIT HERE. HOWEVER, GOA IS RELUCTANT TO TIE PROGRESS ON LOCATION AND RELEASE OF DEAN AND SHARMAN TO AUSTRALIAN AID TO LAOS. MILLER NOTED THAT SHORT ARTICLE ON SHARMAN HAD APPEARED IN "SYDNEY MORNING HERALD" OF JAN 4 BUT BURIED ON BACK PAGES. SHARMAN
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HAD ONCE WORKED FOR "HERALD" AS CUB REPORTER, AND THERE HAVE

SINCE BEEN SEVERAL AUSTRALIAN PRESS INQUIRIES RE SHARMAN, BASED ON ARTICLE. MILLER UNDERTOOK TO INFORM US REGARDING DISCUSSION OF DEAN/SHARMAN CASE WITH SOTH.

3. COMMENT: IF NO SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS MADE THROUGH DISCUSSIONS WITH SOTH, DEPT AND EMBASSY VIENTIANE MAY WISH TO CONSIDER WAYS AND MEANS OF HAVING INTERNATIONAL PRESS INSTITUTE GIVE PUBLICITY TO CASE, SINCE SHARMAN CAN PROBABLY BE TERMED FREE LANCE JOURNALIST, AND DEAN MIGHT BE REPRESENTED AS HAVING ESSENTIALLY SAME STATUS.

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